

Sept. 8, 1875; one on Aug. 26, 1879; one on Aug. 28, and one on Sept. 1, 1886; one on Sept. 5, 1892. I am consequently inclined to regard them as not very abundant in the above locality. Of the few which I have seen I have remarked their extreme gentleness and desire to be in company with other birds. On one occasion I had one alight among my Plover decoys on the upland (which they seem very fond of frequenting) and, not wishing to shoot it, I allowed it to remain for quite a while so I could watch it. During this time it moved about with unconcern, apparently not being aware that its supposed companions were of wood. It seemed so gentle that I determined to see how near it would permit me to approach, and it was not over five or six feet from me when it flew away, but only for a short time, however, for it returned and alighted in the course of ten or fifteen minutes. Having no desire to shoot it, I allowed it to remain until it departed not to return. All the birds that I have seen come immediately to the decoys on perceiving them, and alight without hesitation or fear. Their flight is rapid, with many turns and zigzag movements, and near the ground, constantly turning up so as to show their entire under parts.

They vary greatly in size, so much so that, speaking from memory, I should say some of those I have recorded were nearly two thirds larger than others. I think the plumage of the younger birds is rather lighter colored all over than the adults'. I have never observed more than seven or eight birds in a flock, and then only once. With their noticeable, clean-cut outline, and peculiarly soft, blended plumage, they are one of our most graceful and attractive Sandpipers.—GERRIE W. MACKAY, *Nantucket, Mass.*

A Specimen of *Numenius arquatus* Said to have been Taken on Long Island, N. Y. — The collection of the New York State Museum contains a specimen of Curlew labelled "*Numenius longirostris*, Long-billed Curlew, male, taken on Long Island in 1853." The specimen proves to be a European Curlew (*Numenius arquatus*). Mr. William Dutcher has compared the specimen with specimens of *Numenius arquatus* in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, and says there is not the slightest doubt that the bird belongs to that species. This being the case, the statement on the label that the bird was taken on Long Island becomes an interesting one. Mr. Brewster, Mr. Ridgway and Dr. Merriam inform me that, so far as they know, the species has never been recorded as occurring in an American locality.

The annual reports of the New York State Museum (or Cabinet) record but three specimens of Long-billed Curlew, *Numenius longirostris*, as having been received into the State collection, viz., one specimen (without data of any kind) recorded in the 1st Report, p. 17, 1848; one male, recorded as part of the De Rham collection, 4th Report, p. 36, 1851; one male, recorded in the 7th Report, p. 17, 1854. This last specimen was received in 1853 as it is recorded in "Appendix A. Catalogue of the quad-

rupeds, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, etc., added to the State Cabinet of Natural History, from January 1st, 1853, to January 1st, 1854."

At the present day there are three specimens in the State collection labelled "*Numenius longirostris*, Long-billed Curlew," viz., one without data of any kind—corresponding in this respect to the entry in the 1st Report; one in the De Rham collection, marked "male"—corresponding to the entry in the 4th Report; the third is the specimen of *Numenius arquatus* under consideration, and is labelled "Male, taken on Long Island in 1853"—corresponding *in sex and date* to the entry in the 7th Report. The report contains no record of the locality in which the specimen was taken. The writer does not consider this omission as of any importance except that it may be looked upon as in a measure supporting the supposition that the bird came from some locality within the State of New York. The older Reports of the State Cabinet do not contain records of localities for animals, except when the occurrence of a species in a certain locality was considered remarkable. The Reports give evidence that the specimen of *Numenius arquatus* was believed to be the common Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius longirostris*) known to occur more or less plentifully within the State, so that the locality in which the specimen was taken was not thought worthy of remark.

The writing on the label is apparently very old, and is in the hand of the late John Gebhard, who was curator of the State Cabinet at the time the bird was received. Mr. Gebhard was in the employ of the institution at the time of his death in 1887, in the capacity of guide; and was believed to be familiar with the history of most of the zoölogical specimens. About ten years ago the birds and their labels were marked with corresponding numbers. The work was done by Mr. Martin Sheehy, who is still in the employ of the museum, and at a time when Mr. Gebhard was connected with the institution. On account of the position which he held—that of guide—Mr. Gebhard's eyes were upon the collection almost every day. Under such circumstances it is hardly possible that there could have been any confusion of labels without attracting his attention.—WM. B. MARSHALL, *New York State Museum, Albany, N. Y.*

The above notes were read at the last Congress of the American Ornithologists' Union, November, 1891, and the specimen in question also was exhibited. The identity of the specimen being beyond question, the only other point to be decided is, whether the claim that it was taken in North America is well founded. In addition to the facts submitted above by Mr. Marshall, he also found in the Comptroller's Office in Albany, a bill made by James A. Hurst, dated June 8, 1853, for certain specimens of mammals, birds, etc., among which is this item, "Long-billed Curlew, male, very fine, \$5.00." Mr. Hurst who sold this specimen to the State Museum was in the employ of the State Cabinet at the date of the bill and for many years afterward in the capacity of taxidermist. It is evident neither Mr. Gebhard, the curator, nor Mr. Hurst, the taxidermist, were aware that the specimen added to the collection at that time was the European

Curlew, as they labelled it 'Long-billed Curlew.' If they had been acquainted with its identity, it is fair to assume they would have labelled it correctly, from the greater interest that would have been attached. We can also assume with certainty that Mr. Gebhard, in whose handwriting the label is, when the specimen was purchased, asked the taxidermist, Mr. Hurst, the locality the bird came from, and at the time when the fact was fresh in the mind of Mr. Hurst the locality 'Long Island' was added to the record. Mr. Hurst could have had no object in substituting a specimen of the European Curlew for our own form in the New York State collection, as a specimen of the Long-billed Curlew would be much easier to obtain, and further, the cost of a specimen of the European form would have been much greater. That he could have made the substitution knowingly is out of the question, as he was a man of the utmost probity of character and one whose statements could be depended upon implicitly. To further substantiate the fact that this specimen was taken in America it was submitted to Mr. William Palmer, taxidermist of the National Museum, Washington, D. C., and Mr. Jenness Richardson, taxidermist of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, who were present at the Congress, and they without hesitation, after examination, pronounced the specimen to have been mounted from a bird freshly killed and not from a dried skin. —WM. DUTCHER, *New York City*.

Notes on *Syrnium occidentale*. — Some fifty miles N. N. E. of San Diego Bay is a mountain known locally as Smith Mountain, or sometimes as Mt Palomar. It is the culmination of a broken, mountainous region, rising to an altitude of perhaps 6,000 feet, though some distance to the north and southeast are higher peaks. On the mountain are a number of small valleys which are often partially bordered by heavy forests of fir, cedar and oak, especially on the northern slopes.

Last June a small party of us spent a few days on Smith Mountain, selecting one of the smaller uninhabited valleys as our camp ground. The first night there two ladies of the party who, unaccustomed to camping out, were kept awake by sounds that they thought were made by a fox or an Owl, they could not tell which. I had heard the note of an Owl during the night, but sleepily decided that it was the Great Horned Owl. The next night I did not sleep so soundly, and heard the sounds distinctly and knew that I was listening to a bird note new to me. From the sounds made I thought that there was a pair of the birds as one set of notes was deeper than the other. We were camped at the base of a very steep slope at the mouth of a little gulch. The Owls appeared to be up toward the head of the gulch. In the morning I explored the locality from which the sounds came, and found among the large trees a dense growth of small firs and cedars of a quarter of an acre or so in extent which I thought was where the Owls probably were. Before dark I took my stand at the lower edge of the thicket and soon heard the hissing note of a young Owl, apparently calling for food. I was cautiously working my way up the steep